

CHAPTER 11
APPLICATION FOR, MODIFICATION OF, AND TERMINATION OF BENEFITS

[Prior to 11/24/04, see 581—Ch 21]

495—11.1(97B) Application for benefits.

11.1(1) Form used. It is the responsibility of the member to notify IPERS of the intention to retire. This should be done 60 days before the expected retirement date. The application for monthly retirement benefits is obtainable from IPERS, 7401 Register Drive, P.O. Box 9117, Des Moines, Iowa 50306-9117. The printed application form shall be completed by each member applying for benefits and shall be mailed, sent by fax or brought in person to IPERS. An application that is incomplete or incorrectly completed will be returned to the member. To be considered complete, an application must include the following:

- a. Proof of date of birth for the member.
- b. Option selected, and
 - (1) If Option 1 is selected, the death benefit amount.
 - (2) If Option 4 or 6 is selected, the contingent annuitant's name, social security number, proof of date of birth, and relationship to member.
 - (3) If Option 1, 2, or 5 is selected, a list of beneficiaries.
- c. If the member is disabled, a copy of the award letter from social security or railroad retirement and a statement that the member is retiring due to disability.
- d. If the member has been terminated less than one year, the employer certification page must be completed by the employer.
- e. Signature of member and spouse, both properly notarized.
- f. If the member has no spouse, "NONE" must be designated.

A retirement application is deemed to be valid and binding when the first payment is paid. Members shall not cancel their applications, change their option choice, or change an IPERS option containing contingent annuitant benefits after that date.

11.1(2) Proof required in connection with application. Proof of date of birth to be submitted with an application for benefits shall be in the form of a birth certificate or an infant baptismal certificate. If these records do not exist, the applicant shall submit two other documents or records which will verify the day, month and year of birth. A photographic identification record may be accepted even if now expired unless the passage of time has made it impossible to determine if the photographic identification record is that of the applicant. The following records or documents are among those deemed acceptable to IPERS as proof of date of birth:

- a. United States census record;
- b. Military record or identification card;
- c. Naturalization record;
- d. A marriage license showing age of applicant in years, months and days on date of issuance;
- e. A life insurance policy;
- f. Records in a school's administrative office;
- g. An official form from the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service, such as the "green card," containing such information;
- h. Driver's license or Iowa nondriver identification card;
- i. Adoption papers;
- j. A family Bible record. A photostatic copy will be accepted with certification by a notary that the record appears to be genuine; or

k. Any other document or record ten or more years old, or certification from the custodian of such records which verifies the day, month, and year of birth.

If the member, the member's representative, or the member's beneficiary is unable or unwilling to provide proof of birth, or in the case of death, proof of death, IPERS may rely on such resources as it has available, including but not limited to records from the Social Security Administration, Iowa division of records and statistics, IPERS' own internal records, or reports derived from other public records, and other departmental or governmental records to which IPERS may have access.

IPERS is required to begin making payments to a member or beneficiary who has reached the required beginning date specified by Internal Revenue Code Section 401(a)(9). In order to begin making such payments and to protect IPERS' status as a plan qualified under Internal Revenue Code Section 401(a), IPERS may rely on its internal records with regard to date of birth, if the member or beneficiary is unable or unwilling to provide the proofs required by this subrule within 30 days after written notification of IPERS' intent to begin mandatory payments.

495—11.2(97B) Retirement benefits and the age reduction factor.

11.2(1) Normal retirement.

a. A member shall be eligible for monthly retirement benefits with no age reduction effective with the first of the month in which the member attains the age of 65, if otherwise eligible.

b. Effective July 1, 1998, a member shall be eligible for full monthly retirement benefits with no age reduction effective with the first of the month in which the member attains the age of 62, if the member has 20 full years of service and is otherwise eligible.

c. Effective July 1, 1997, a member shall be eligible to receive monthly retirement benefits with no age reduction effective the first of the month in which the member's age on the last birthday and the member's years of service equal or exceed 88, provided that the member is at least the age of 55 and is otherwise eligible.

11.2(2) Early retirement. A member shall be eligible to receive benefits for early retirement effective with the first of the month in which the member attains the age of 55 or the first of any month after attaining the age of 55 before the member's normal retirement date, provided the date is after the last day of service and the member is otherwise eligible.

11.2(3) Aged 70 and older retirees. A member shall be eligible to receive monthly retirement benefits with no age reduction effective with the first day of the month in which the member attains the age of 70, even if the member continues to be employed.

11.2(4) Required beginning date. Notwithstanding the foregoing, IPERS shall commence payment of a member's retirement benefit under Iowa Code sections 97B.49A to 97B.49I (under Option 2) no later than the "required beginning date" specified under Internal Revenue Code Section 401(a)(9), even if the member has not submitted the application for benefits. If the lump sum actuarial equivalent could have been elected by the member, payments shall be made in such a lump sum rather than as a monthly allowance. The "required beginning date" is defined as the later of: (1) April 1 of the year following the year that the member attains the age of 70½, or (2) April 1 of the year following the year that the member actually terminates all employment with employers covered under Iowa Code chapter 97B.

If IPERS distributes a member's benefits without the member's consent in order to begin benefits on or before the required beginning date, the member may elect to receive benefits under an option other than the default option described above, or as a refund, if the member contacts IPERS in writing within 60 days of the first mandatory distribution. IPERS shall inform the member which adjustments or repayments are required in order to make the change.

If a member cannot be located to commence payment on or before the required beginning date described above, the member's benefit shall be forfeited. However, if a member later contacts IPERS and wishes to file an application for retirement benefits, the member's benefits shall be reinstated.

For purposes of determining benefits, the life expectancy of a member, a member's spouse, or a member's beneficiary shall not be recalculated after benefits commence.

11.2(5) *Mandatory distribution of small inactive accounts.* As soon as practicable after July 1, 2004, IPERS shall distribute small inactive accounts to members and beneficiaries as authorized in 2004 Iowa Acts, House File 2262, section 28.

495—11.3(97B) First month of entitlement (FME).

11.3(1) *General.* A member shall submit a written application to IPERS setting forth the retirement date, provided the member has attained at least age 55 by the retirement date and the retirement date is after the member's last day of service. A member's first month of entitlement shall be no earlier than the first day of the first month after the member's last day of service or, if later, the month provided for under subrule 11.3(2). No payment shall be made for any month prior to the month the completed application for benefits is received by IPERS.

If a member files a retirement application but fails to select a valid first month of entitlement, IPERS will select by default the earliest month possible. A member may appeal this default selection by sending written notice of the appeal postmarked on or before 30 days after a notice of the default selection was mailed to the member. Notice of the default selection is deemed sufficient if sent to the member at the member's address.

11.3(2) *Additional FME provisions.*

a. Effective through December 31, 1992, the first month of entitlement of a member who qualifies for retirement benefits is the first month following the member's date of termination or last day of leave, with or without pay, whichever is later.

b. Effective January 1, 1993, the first month of entitlement of an employee who qualifies for retirement benefits shall be the first month after the employee is paid the last paycheck, if paid more than one calendar month after termination. If the final paycheck is paid within the month after termination, the first month of entitlement shall be the month following termination.

c. Effective January 1, 2001, employees of a school corporation who are permitted by the terms of their employment contracts to receive their annual salaries in monthly installments over periods ranging from 9 to 12 months may retire at the end of a school year and receive trailing wages through the end of the contract year if they have completely fulfilled their contract obligations at the time of retirement. For purposes of this paragraph, "school corporation" means body politic described in Iowa Code sections 260C.16 (community colleges), 273.2 (area education agencies) and 273.1 (K-12 public schools). For purposes of this paragraph, "trailing wages" means previously earned wage payments made to such employees of a school corporation after the first month of entitlement. This exception does not apply to hourly employees, including those who make arrangements with their employers to hold back hourly wages for payment at a later date, to employees who are placed on sick or disability leave or leave of absence, or to employees who receive lump sum leave, vacation leave, early retirement incentive pay or any other lump sum payments in installments.

For all employees of all IPERS covered employers who terminate employment in January 2003, or later, if the final paycheck is paid within the same quarter or within one quarter after termination and wages are reported under the normal pay schedule, the first month of entitlement shall be the month following termination. However, if the last paycheck is paid more than one quarter after the termination, the first month of entitlement shall be the first month after the employee is paid the last paycheck. Under no circumstances shall such trailing wages result in more than one quarter of service credit being added to retiring members' earning records.

11.3(3) *Survival into designated FME.* To be eligible for a monthly retirement benefit, the member must survive into the designated first month of entitlement. If the member dies prior to the first month of entitlement, the member's application for monthly benefits is canceled and the distribution of the member's account is made pursuant to Iowa Code section 97B.52. Cancellation of the application shall not invalidate a beneficiary designation. If the application is dated later in time than any other designations, IPERS will accept the designation in a canceled application as binding until a subsequent designation is filed.

11.3(4) *Members retiring under the rule of 88.* The first month of entitlement of a member qualifying under the rule of 88 shall be the first of the month when the member's age as of the last birthday and years of service equal 88. The fact that a member's birthday allowing a member to qualify for the rule of 88 is the same month as the first month of entitlement does not affect the retirement date.

495—11.4(97B) Termination of monthly retirement allowance. A member's retirement benefit shall terminate after payment is made to the member for the entire month during which the member's death occurs. Death benefits shall begin with the month following the month in which the member's death occurs.

Upon the death of the retired member, IPERS will reconcile the decedent's account to determine if an overpayment was made to the retired member and if further payment(s) is due to the retired member's named beneficiary, contingent annuitant, heirs at law or estate. If an overpayment has been made to the retired member, IPERS will determine if steps should be taken to seek collection of the overpayment from the named beneficiary, contingent annuitant, estate, heirs at law, or other interested parties.

495—11.5(97B) Bona fide retirement and bona fide refund.

11.5(1) *Bona fide retirement—general.* To receive retirement benefits, a member under the age of 70 must officially leave employment with all IPERS covered employers, give up all rights as an employee, and complete a period of bona fide retirement. A period of bona fide retirement means four or more consecutive calendar months for which the member qualifies for monthly retirement benefit payments. The qualification period begins with the member's first month of entitlement for retirement benefits as approved by IPERS. A member may not return to covered employment before filing a completed application for benefits. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the continuation of group insurance coverage at employee rates for the remainder of the school year for a school employee who retires following completion of services by that individual shall not cause that person to be in violation of IPERS' bona fide retirement requirements.

A member will not be considered to have a bona fide retirement if the member is a school or university employee and returns to work with the employer after the normal summer vacation. In other positions, temporary or seasonal interruption of service which does not terminate the period of employment does not constitute a bona fide retirement. A member also will not be considered to have a bona fide retirement if the member has, prior to or during the member's first month of entitlement, entered into contractual arrangements with the employer to return to employment after the expiration of the four-month bona fide retirement period.

Effective July 1, 1990, a school employee will not be considered terminated if, while performing the normal duties, the employee performs for the same employer additional duties which take the employee beyond the expected termination date for the normal duties. Only when all the employee's compensated duties cease for that employer will that employee be considered terminated.

The bona fide retirement period will be waived, however, if the member is elected to public office which term begins during the normal four-month bona fide retirement period. This waiver does not apply if the member was an elected official who was reelected to the same position for another term. The bona fide retirement period will also be waived for state legislators who terminate their nonlegislative employment and the IPERS coverage for their legislative employment and begin retirement but wish to continue with their legislative duties.

A member will have a bona fide retirement if the member returns to work as an independent contractor with a public employer during the four-month qualifying period. Independent contractors are not covered under IPERS.

Effective July 1, 1998, through June 30, 2000, a member does not have a bona fide retirement until all employment with covered employers, including employment which is not covered by 495—Chapter 4, is terminated and the member receives at least four monthly benefit payments. In order to receive retirement benefits, the member must file a completed application for benefits with IPERS before returning to any employment with the same employer.

Effective July 1, 2000, a member does not have a bona fide retirement until all employment with covered employers, including employment which is not covered under this chapter, is terminated for at least one month, and the member does not return to covered employment for an additional three months. In order to receive retirement benefits, the member must file a completed application for benefits before returning to any employment with a covered employer.

11.5(2) *Bona fide retirement—licensed health care professionals.* For retirees whose first month of entitlement is no earlier than July 2004 and no later than June 2006, a retiree who is reemployed as a “licensed health care professional” by a “public hospital” does not have a bona fide retirement until all employment with covered employers is terminated for at least one month. In order to receive retirement benefits, the member must file a completed application for benefits form before returning to any employment with a covered employer.

“Licensed health care professional” means a public employee who is a physician, surgeon, podiatrist, osteopath, psychologist, physical therapist, physical therapist assistant, nurse, speech pathologist, audiologist, occupational therapist, respiratory therapist, pharmacist, social worker, dietitian, mental health counselor, or physician assistant who is required to be licensed under Iowa Code chapter 147.

“Public hospital” means a governmental entity of a political subdivision of the state of Iowa that is authorized by legislative authority. For purposes of this subrule, a “public hospital” must also meet the requirements of Iowa Code section 249I.3. Under Iowa Code section 249I.3, a “public hospital” must be licensed pursuant to Iowa Code chapter 135B and governed pursuant to Iowa Code chapter 145A (merged hospitals), Iowa Code chapter 347 (county hospitals), Iowa Code chapter 347A (county hospitals payable from revenue), or Iowa Code chapter 392 (creation by city of a hospital or health care facility). For the purposes of this definition, “public hospital” does not include a hospital or medical care facility that is funded, operated, or administered by the Iowa department of human services, Iowa department of corrections, or board of regents, or the Iowa Veterans Home.

A “public hospital” possesses the powers conferred upon it by statute, the Iowa Constitution, and regulatory provisions that are unique to governmental entities and hospitals. For example, a “public hospital” may finance its activities by tax levies or the issuance of bonds, condemn property, hold elections, and join forces with other governmental entities in cooperative ventures that are authorized under Iowa Code chapter 28D and Iowa Code chapter 28E. “Public hospitals” are subject to scrutiny by the public by complying with Iowa Code chapter 21 (open meetings Act) and Iowa Code chapter 22 (open records Act). Public employees of a “public hospital” are covered by Iowa Code chapter 20 (public employment relations Act). A “public hospital” can be distinguished from a profit or not-for-profit hospital by examining whether the focus of the hospital is community service with profits being applied not to rates of return to investors, but to enhance community services, facility upgrading, or subsidized care for persons unable to pay the full cost of service.

This subrule only applies to reemployments that meet all the foregoing requirements and in addition occur following a “complete termination of employment.” A “complete termination of employment” means: (1) the employer must post the opening and conduct a job search; (2) the retired member must receive all termination payouts that are mandatory for other terminated employees of that employer; (3) the retired member must give up all perquisites of seniority, to the extent applicable to all other terminated employees of that employer; and (4) the retired member must not enter into a reemployment agreement with the prior employer or another public hospital as defined in this subrule prior to or during the first month of entitlement.

11.5(3) *Bona fide refund.* The 30-day bona fide refund period shall be waived for an elected official covered under Iowa Code section 97B.1A(8)“a”(1), and for a member of the general assembly covered under Iowa Code section 97B.1A(8)“a”(2), when the elected official or legislator notifies IPERS of the intent to terminate IPERS coverage for the elective office and, at the same time, terminates all other IPERS covered employment prior to the issuance of the refund. Such an official may remain in the elective office and receive an IPERS refund without violating IPERS’ bona fide refund rules. If such elected official terminates coverage for the elective office and also terminates all other IPERS covered employment but is then reemployed in covered employment, and has not received a refund as of the date of hire, the refund shall not be made. Furthermore, if such elected official is reemployed in covered employment, the election to revoke IPERS coverage for the elective position shall remain in effect, and the public official shall not be eligible for new IPERS coverage for such elected position.

The prior election to revoke IPERS coverage for the elected position shall also remain in effect if such elected official is reelected to the same position without an intervening term out of office. The waiver granted in this subrule shall be applicable to such elected officials who were in violation of the prior bona fide refund rules on and after November 1, 2002, when such individuals have not repaid the previously invalid refund.

If a member takes a refund in violation of the bona fide refund requirements of Iowa Code section 97B.53(4), the member shall have 30 days from the date of written notice by IPERS to repay the refund in full without interest. Thereafter, in order to receive service credit for the period covered by the refund, the member shall be required to buy back the period of service at its full actuarial cost.

495—11.6(97B) Payment processing and administration.

11.6(1) *Paper warrants processing fee.* Effective July 1, 2005, IPERS shall charge a per-warrant processing fee to members who choose to receive paper warrants in lieu of electronic deposits of their monthly retirement allowance. The fee may be waived if the person establishes that it would be an undue hardship for the person to do what is necessary to receive payment of the person’s IPERS monthly retirement allowance by electronic deposit. The processing fee will be deducted from the member’s retirement allowance on a posttax basis.

For purposes of this subrule, a member claiming undue hardship must establish that the cost normally assessed for the processing of paper warrants would be unduly burdensome because of the member’s limited income, or is otherwise financially burdensome or physically impracticable.

11.6(2) *Repeated requests for replacement warrants.* Effective July 1, 2002, for a member or beneficiary who, due to the member’s or beneficiary’s own actions or inactions, has benefits warrants replaced twice in a six-month period, except when the need for a replacement warrant is caused by IPERS’ failure to mail to the address specified by the recipient, payment shall be suspended until such time as the recipient establishes a direct deposit account in a bank, credit union or similar financial institution and provides IPERS with the information necessary to make electronic transfer of said monthly payments. Persons subject to said cases may be required to provide a face-to-face interview and additional documentation to prove that such a suspension would result in an undue hardship.

11.6(3) *Forgery claims.* When a forgery of a warrant issued in payment of an IPERS refund or benefit is alleged, the claimant must complete and sign an affidavit before a notary public that the endorsement is a forgery. A supplementary statement must be attached to the affidavit setting forth the details and circumstances of the alleged forgery.

11.6(4) *Rollover fees.* If a member who is paid a lump sum distribution, or a beneficiary who is the member's spouse and is paid a lump sum death benefit which qualifies to be rolled over, requests that the taxable portion be rolled over to more than one IRA or other qualified plan, IPERS may assess a \$5 administrative fee for each additional rollover beyond the first one. The fee will be deducted from the gross amount of each distribution, less federal and state income tax.

11.6(5) *Offsets against amounts payable.* IPERS may, with or without consent and upon reasonable proof thereof, offset amounts currently payable to a member or the member's designated beneficiaries, heirs, assigns or other successors in interest by the amount of IPERS benefits paid in error to or on behalf of such member or the member's designated beneficiaries, heirs, assigns or other successors in interest.

495—11.7(97B) Overpayment of IPERS benefits.

11.7(1) *Overpayments—general.*

a. An "overpayment" means a payment of money by IPERS that results in a recipient receiving a higher payment than the recipient is entitled to under the provisions of Iowa Code chapter 97B.

b. A "recipient" is a person or beneficiary, heir, assign, or other successor in interest who receives an overpayment from an IPERS benefit and is liable to repay the amount(s) upon receipt of a written explanation and request for the amounts to be repaid.

c. If IPERS determines that the cost of recovering the amount of an overpayment is estimated to exceed the overpayment, the repayment may be deemed to be unrecoverable.

d. If the overpayment is equal to or less than \$50 and cannot be recovered from other IPERS payments, IPERS may limit its recovery efforts to written requests for repayment and other nonjudicial remedies.

11.7(2) *Overpayment made to a retired member.* A retired member shall receive written notice of overpayment, including the reason for the overpayment, the amount of the overpayment, and a limited opportunity to repay the overpayment in full without interest. If a retired member repays an overpayment in full within 30 days after the date of the notice, there will be no interest charge. A retired member may repay an overpayment out of pocket or direct IPERS to recover the overpayment from future retirement benefit payments, or a combination of both. If the retired member cannot repay an overpayment in full, either out of pocket or from the next monthly installment of retirement benefits, or both, interest shall be charged. A retired member who cannot repay the full amount of the overpayment within 30 days after the date of the notice must enter into an agreement with IPERS to make monthly installment payments, or to have the overpayment offset against future monthly benefit payments or death benefits, if any, and authorize any unpaid balance as a first priority claim in the recipient's estate.

11.7(3) *Overpayment made to a person other than a retired member.* A recipient other than a retired member, except a recipient listed in subrule 11.7(4), shall receive written notice of overpayment, including the reason for the overpayment, the amount of the overpayment, and the opportunity to repay the overpayment in full without interest. If such a recipient repays an overpayment in full within 30 days after the date of the notice, there will be no interest charge. If such a recipient cannot repay an overpayment in full within 30 days after the date of the notice, interest shall be charged. If repayment in full cannot be made within 30 days, such a recipient shall make repayment arrangements subject to IPERS' approval within 30 days of the written notice and request for repayment.

If the overpayment recipient cannot be located to receive notice of the overpayment at the recipient's last-known address, IPERS shall, after trying to locate the person, consider the recipient to have waived entitlement to the quarters covered by the refund.

11.7(4) *Overpayment made to a person who violates a bona fide severance period.* If a recipient takes a refund and does not complete the required period of severance, the recipient shall receive a written notice of overpayment, including the reason for the overpayment, the amount of the overpayment, and the opportunity to repay the overpayment in full without interest. The recipient shall have 30 days after the date of notice to repay the full amount of the refund without interest. If the repayment is not made within 30 days after the date of notice, the person shall receive no credit for the period of employment covered by the refund and shall be required to buy back the refund at its actuarial cost if the member later decides that the member wants service credit for any portion of the period of employment covered by the refund.

11.7(5) *Interest charges.*

a. Overpayment not fraudulent. If the overpayment of benefits, other than an overpayment that results from a violation described in subrule 11.7(4), was not the result of wrongdoing, negligence, misrepresentation, or omission of the recipient, the recipient is liable to pay interest charges at the rate of 5 percent, or the rate IPERS determines, on the outstanding balance, beginning 30 days after the date of notice of the overpayment(s) is provided by IPERS.

b. Overpayments as the result of fraud. If the overpayment of benefits, other than an overpayment that results from a violation described in subrule 11.7(4), was the result of wrongdoing, negligence, misrepresentation, or omission of the recipient, the recipient is liable to pay interest charges at the rate of 5 percent on the outstanding balance, beginning on the date of the overpayment(s).

c. Overpayments that result in a judgment. If the overpayment results in a judgment against the recipient, the interest rate may be set by the court.

11.7(6) *Recovery of overpayment from a deceased recipient.* If a recipient dies prior to the full repayment of an erroneous overpayment of benefits, IPERS shall be entitled to apply to the estate of the deceased to recover the remaining balance.

11.7(7) *Offsets against amounts payable.* IPERS may, in addition to other remedies and after notice to the recipient, request an offset against amounts owing to the recipient by the state according to the offset procedures pursuant to Iowa Code sections 8A.504 and 421.17.

11.7(8) *Rights of appeal.* A recipient who is notified of an overpayment and required to make repayments under this rule may appeal IPERS' determination in writing to the chief executive officer. The written request must explain the basis of the appeal and must be received by IPERS' office within 30 days of overpayment notice pursuant to 495—Chapter 26.

11.7(9) *Release of overpayment.* IPERS may release a recipient from liability to repay an overpayment, in whole or in part, if IPERS determines that the receipt of overpayment is not the fault of the recipient, and that it would be contrary to equity and good conscience to collect the overpayment. No release of an individual recipient's obligation to repay an overpayment shall stand as precedent for release of another recipient's obligation to repay an overpayment.

These rules are intended to implement Iowa Code sections 97B.4, 97B.9A, 97B.15, 97B.25, 97B.38, 97B.40, 97B.45, 97B.47, 97B.48, 97B.48A, 97B.49A to 97B.49I, 97B.50, 97B.51, 97B.52, 97B.52A, 97B.53, and 97B.53B.

[Filed 11/5/04, Notice 9/15/04—published 11/24/04, effective 12/29/04]

[Filed 12/1/05, Notice 10/26/05—published 12/21/05, effective 1/25/06]

[Filed 4/7/06, Notice 3/1/06—published 4/26/06, effective 5/31/06]